

# CAMP BURNT GIN



A SUMMER CAMP  
FOR CHILDREN  
WHO HAVE  
SPECIAL HEALTH  
CARE NEEDS

PARENT HANDBOOK





## Dear Parents,

Going to summer camp is an exciting, new adventure for campers as well as their parents. As a parent, it is natural for you to have questions and to be a little nervous about sending your child to camp. I hope this handbook will help answer your questions and prepare you and your child for this experience.

Camp Burnt Gin is more than just a place. It's an experience of a lifetime. It's learning to swim; appreciating the environment; riding in a paddleboat; performing in a talent show; making a craft; discovering a buried treasure; roasting marshmallows; singing campfire songs; meeting new friends; gaining independence; helping others; feeling good about yourself and having lots of fun!

Thank you for giving your child the opportunity to go to summer camp and for entrusting him/her to us. DHEC has offered this special service to South Carolinians since 1945. We are very pleased that your child will camp with us this year. We have an exciting program planned and a wonderful, caring staff who are eager to meet their campers. We look forward to the privilege of sharing the Camp Burnt Gin experience with your child. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at 803-898-0784, 803-898-0613 (fax), or [campburntgin@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:campburntgin@dhec.sc.gov).



In the Burnt Gin spirit,

Marie I. Aimone, Camp Director  
Camp Burnt Gin  
*A DHEC service for Children and Youth with  
Special Health Care Needs*



## Our philosophy

The purpose of Camp Burnt Gin is to provide a safe, summer camping experience for children who have a physical disability and/or chronic illness. Through this experience, we help children become more independent, meet new friends, learn recreational skills, develop healthy habits, and improve their self-esteem.

## Rules of camp

1. Have fun and be safe.
2. Listen to your counselors.
3. Respect yourself and others. Profanity and other disrespectful remarks are not allowed.
4. Solve your problems in a peaceful manner.  
Fighting, hitting, kicking or harming others in any way is not tolerated.
5. Alcohol, drugs and tobacco products (cigarettes and chewing tobacco) are not allowed.
6. Weapons of any kind (guns, knives, etc.) are strictly prohibited.

Please discuss the rules with your child. We recognize the special needs of our campers and will, as much as possible, individualize the rules according to the needs and abilities of each camper. If you have any concerns regarding your child's ability to abide by these rules, please call the camp director, Marie Aimone.





## What to Bring to Camp

When packing, please only send play clothes and put your child's name or initials in each article of clothing with a permanent marker. Keeping up with clothes is one of the counselors' greatest challenges! We have a laundry facility and will wash clothes if a child runs out of clean clothes. Try to send only what you feel is necessary for a week. Below is what we think your child can use at camp.

- t-shirts
- underwear
- shorts
- pajamas
- socks
- bathing suit
- comb/brush
- medicine
- one pair of long pants (jeans or sweats)
- shoes (tennis shoes suggested)
- flip flops or sandals (for the pool and bath house)
- toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, deodorant
- special equipment (wheelchair, AFOs, special feeding equipment)
- medical supplies used by your child (diapers, special formula)



Camp Burnt Gin is not responsible for expenses related to the damage or loss of such items as radios, CD players, iPods and cameras. Campers may bring these items at their own risk.

**Campers do not need** towels, sheets and pillows (supplied by camp) or money

## The following items are not allowed at camp:

- electronic games
- pets
- personal sports equipment
- cell phones
- TVs and DVD players
- weapons
- music containing profanity and/or inappropriate language or subject matter
- tobacco products, alcohol, and drugs

## Emergency Telephone Numbers of Family Members

During your child's stay at camp, the camp staff must be able to reach you or your designated emergency contact person. If your phone number or that of your emergency contact has changed since you completed your child's application, please provide the camp staff with current phone numbers. If you are going out of town during your child's stay at camp, please provide the camp with a telephone number where you can be reached.

## Transportation Issues

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation or make arrangements for transportation to and from camp for their child. It is also the parent/guardian's responsibility to pick up the child if he/she has to leave camp before the session is over (i.e., illness, problems adjusting to camp life). We **STRONGLY** recommend that families have a back up plan in case their primary means of transportation fails. Camp Burnt Gin staff members cannot give campers a ride home.



## Opening Day

Campers must arrive between 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. The check-in process will take at least an hour. During check-in the camper and parent or accompanying adult will:

- Meet the camp counselor assigned to your child
- Review camper's medications with the camp nurse.
- Go to the infirmary where a nurse will complete a brief health screening.
- Visit your child's cabin to see where your child will be staying.

Due to the special needs of our campers, it is important that our staff have the opportunity to meet parents and learn from them! We appreciate your assistance and patience with this process.





## Daily Life at Camp

### Who is taking care of your child?

A typical cabin has eight children and three staff members who live with the campers and are responsible for their supervision and personal care. The majority of the staff are college students who are planning on working in the field of education, healthcare or in another social service capacity. They typically come to Camp Burnt Gin to gain some valuable work experience and because they heard it was a fun, rewarding summer job.

The camp staff participate in a week long training program to: learn about the different disabilities of the children and how to take care of them; the camp routine and specific camp skills; camp policies and procedures; and how to deal with homesickness and other behavioral issues.

### Daily Schedule

7:15 a.m. ....	Wake up, get dressed and clean cabin
8:15 a.m. ....	Breakfast
9:00 a.m. ....	“Thought for the Day” and Exercise
9:15 a.m. ....	Committee Work and Nature Study Activity
10:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. ....	Arts and Crafts
10:45 a.m. - 11:30 a.m. ....	Sports and Games
11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m. ....	Swimming Lessons
12:15 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. ....	Fine Arts
1:05 p.m. - 2:00 p.m. ....	Lunch
2:15 p.m. - 3:15 p.m. ....	Rest Hour
3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. ....	Swimming and Boating
5:15 p.m. ....	Showers
6:00 p.m. ....	Dinner and Swimming Awards
7:15 p.m. - 8:45 p.m. ....	Evening Program
9:30 p.m. ....	Bedtime



## Mail

Children love to get mail! Since our sessions are fairly short, you might want to mail a letter the day your child leaves for camp or shortly thereafter so he/she will receive it before going home. Write as often as you want and always try to be upbeat. Creative ideas for mail: send a comic strip, a drawing by their brother or sister, a note from their favorite pet; and decorate the envelope.

*Mailing address:      Your child's name, Camp Burnt Gin  
1980 Burnt Gin Road, Wedgefield, SC 29168*

## Phone calls

We realize that you may be concerned about your child and need to know how he/she is adjusting. It is OK to give us a quick call (once or twice during the session) to check on your child, but please do not ask us to bring your child to the phone or have him/her call you. The children are busy and having fun. Leaving an activity to come to the phone can be very disruptive to the camper and usually causes the child to become homesick. *Camp Office - (803) 494-3145*, for questions about child's adjustment to camp. *Camp Infirmary - (803) 494-3116*, for questions about child's health.



## What if My Child Becomes Homesick?

For many children, going to camp is their first time away from home. Typically, homesickness occurs during the first day or two. The counselors have been trained to deal with homesickness and help the campers adjust to camp life. In most cases, once your child gets involved in camp activities and gets to know his/her cabin mates and counselors, the homesickness goes away.

If we feel your child is having a particularly difficult time adjusting to camp life, we will call you to discuss the situation. Like you, we want camp to be a positive, healthy, successful experience.





## **Health Care at Camp**

### **Medical Staff**

Two nurses live at camp. The nurses administer the campers' medications, oversee medical treatments and provide first aid and nursing care. Sumter Pediatrics serves as our physicians on call, and we use Tuomey Regional Medical Center in Sumter for emergency medical care and after hours visits. The doctors' office and the hospital are about 20 minutes away. Camp Burnt Gin is on the 911 system.

### **Medications**

If your child takes medicine on a regular basis, please be sure to send enough medicine for the entire camp session. Prescription drugs and over-the-counter medications must be sent in their original containers and the information on the label regarding dosage and how to administer the medicine must be accurate and current. Camp Burnt Gin staff will not dispense vitamins and/or herbal supplements to campers.

The camp's medical consultant has recommended and approved a list of over-the-counter medications for our nursing staff to use to treat common ailments (upset stomach, runny nose, headache, scrapes). If there is an over-the-counter medication which your child is unable to take, please make sure to indicate this on your camp application and tell our nursing staff on check-in day.



### **In what situations will the camp nurse call a parent?**

Don't panic if you get a call or message from the camp nurse. In some instances, she is simply calling to ask you a question regarding your child's medications or care while at camp. Other times, she is calling to tell you that your child is sick.

Small scrapes, bumps, bug bites, headaches and stomach aches are fairly common complaints at camp. With more than 75 children at camp, the nurses simply cannot call the parents every time their child is seen in the infirmary.

You will be called if your child:

- Has a fever (101° Fahrenheit or greater)
- Will spend the night in the infirmary; or
- Has illness or injury requiring medical attention at a doctor's office, urgent care facility or hospital.

For routine visits to the doctor, we will attempt to call you prior to the visit. In the case of an emergency, we will call you as soon as the emergency is under control.

## How to Help Your Child Have a Great Time at Camp

Here are a few things you can do before your child goes to camp to help prepare him/her for this new, exciting learning experience.

1. Discuss what camp will be like in a positive way. You could say, "You and some other children close to your age will live in a cabin with three counselors. Your counselors will take care of you, help you make friends and make sure you have lots of fun. You will get to make things and play games and go swimming. You will learn about animals and plants."
2. Allow your child to pack a favorite stuffed animal and/or a picture as a reminder of home.
3. Send a "happy" letter to your child the day they leave or even before they leave for camp so he/she receives mail from home early in the session.
4. Acknowledge that you will miss your child, but don't overemphasize how much you will miss him/her. This can add to your child's level of homesickness.
5. Don't go into great detail about the fun things you are doing while your child is away at camp or he/she might feel left out.
6. Don't tell your child that you will "rescue" him/her from camp if he/she doesn't like camp or is homesick. With all new experiences, it takes a little while to adjust. If your child knows he/she doesn't have to give camp a chance, often times he/she will not. Remember separation is a part of growing up. It is not always easy, but it helps your child become more independent and confident. It also helps to recognize that separation is often harder on the parent than it is on the child. We will call you if your child is overly homesick.





## **When Your Child Comes Home From Camp**

After a week of camp where the days and evenings are filled with activities, your child may be tired. Give your child some time to rest and readjust to life at home. Praise your child for his/her independence and tell your child you are proud of him/her for going to camp, trying new things and meeting new friends.

When you unpack, you may find some very dirty clothes. Although we do have laundry facilities, we are unable to send everyone home with a suitcase of clean clothes. Items in plastic bags are wet or recently soiled. In an attempt to prevent clothes from getting left behind, we do not send wet or soiled clothes to the laundry on the last day of camp. Counselors simply rinse out these clothes and put them in a plastic bag.

Despite all our efforts to keep up with the children's clothes, items may be left behind or sent home with the wrong camper. If you are missing something, send us a note or call us and give us a description of the item. We will try to find the missing items.

## **Feedback**

We welcome your feedback about our camp program, our staff and your child's camp experience. We will ask you to complete an evaluation form after your child's camp session. In addition, you may share your thoughts about Camp Burnt Gin with the Camp director, or the DHEC Division of Children's Health, Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CSHCN) Program by phone (803-898-0789), fax (803-898-0613), [cshcn@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:cshcn@dhec.sc.gov), or through the DHEC website, [www.scdhec.gov/campburntgin](http://www.scdhec.gov/campburntgin).

We recognize that you may want to express your appreciation to your child's counselors. A thank you note is always special and often the most meaningful gift. Camp staff can not accept gifts, money or tips.

## **Donations**

Camp Burnt Gin welcomes the support of friends, family members and community groups. Tax deductible contributions can be made to "Camp Burnt Gin," and mailed to DHEC/Division of Children's Health/CSHCN Program, Box 101106, Columbia SC 29211.



## Directions to Camp Burnt Gin

### From Columbia

Take Highway 76/378 towards Sumter. At the intersection of Highway 76/378 and Highway 261, take a right on Highway 261. Cross over the railroad tracks in Wedgefield and continue on Highway 261. You will pass the post office on your left. Less than a mile after the post office, you will see the Burnt Gin Road on your left. Take a left on the Burnt Gin Road and continue on the dirt road (you will come to two forks in the road, bear left at each one) until you reach Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).

### From Florence

Take Highway 76 towards Sumter. Highway 76 will merge with Highway 378 near Sumter. Continue on 76/378 past Shaw Air Force Base. At the intersection of Highway 76/378 and Highway 261, take a left on Highway 261. Cross over the railroad tracks in Wedgefield and continue on Highway 261. You will pass the post office on your left. Less than a mile after the post office, you will see the Burnt Gin Road on your left. Take a left on the Burnt Gin Road and continue on the dirt road (you will come to two forks in the road, bear left at each one) until you reach Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).

### From Charleston

Take I-26 to I-95 north. Take the Manning exit, Highway 261. Go left on 261 towards Paxville and Pinewood. Continue on 261 through Pinewood. You will pass the Poinsett State Park. The Burnt Gin Road is approximately 8 miles pass Poinsett State Park on the right. About a mile before the road, you will pass two small churches. Take a right on the Burnt Gin Road (you will come to two forks in the road, bear left at each one) and follow the signs to Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).

### From Sumter

Camp Burnt Gin is located in Wedgefield, S.C., approximately 9 miles from downtown Sumter. Take Liberty Street to the Wedgefield Highway (Hwy 763). Take the Wedgefield Highway. The Burnt Gin Road is approximately 1.5 miles after you cross over the railroad tracks at Spann's Grocery (Cane Savannah). Take a left on the Burnt Gin Road and continue on the dirt road until you reach Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).





## From Greenville

Take I-26 until it intersects with I-77 towards Charlotte. Exit at Highway 378 east - Garners Ferry Road/Sumter. Take a right on Highway 76/378 towards Sumter. At the intersection of Highway 76/378 and Highway 261, take a right on Highway 261. Cross over the railroad tracks in Wedgefield and continue on Highway 261. You will pass the post office on your left. Less than a mile after the post office, you will see the Burnt Gin Road on your left. Take a left on the Burnt Gin Road and continue on the dirt road (you will come to two forks in the road, bear left at each one) until you reach Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).

## From Orangeburg

Take Highway 601. Take a right on Highway 76/378 towards Sumter. At the intersection of Highway 76/378 and Highway 261, take a right on Highway 261. Cross over the railroad tracks in Wedgefield and continue on Highway 261. You will pass the post office on your left. Less than a mile after the post office, you will see the Burnt Gin Road on your left. Take a left on the Burnt Gin Road and continue on the dirt road (you will come to two forks in the road, bear left at each one) until you reach Camp Burnt Gin (1 mile).



South Carolina Department of Health  
and Environmental Control

[www.scdhec.gov/campburntgin](http://www.scdhec.gov/campburntgin)

